DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 051 221 TE 002 405

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TITLE	An Intern Program of Pre-Student Teaching Experiences for Speech Communication Majors.
PUB DATE	Dec 70
NOTE	4p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (56th, New Orleans, December, 1970)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Classroom Observation Techniques, Expectation, *Secondary School Teachers, *Speech Education, *Teacher Interns, Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS	Michigan State University

ABSTRACT

A program designed to provide prospective secondary speech teachers with intern experiences in addition to those received during the formal student teaching program was initiated at Michigan State University. Objectives of the program are to: (1) analyze the classroom situation from a communication process point of view, (2) observe a variety of classroom situations in one school system, (3) clarify expectations of students, their adivsors, and high school teachers as to the role of the new teacher, and (4) provide a relative standard of comparison on which to form an evaluation of teaching as a career. Concurrent to enrolling in his regular methods course, the communication (speech) education major enrolls for four credit hours of independent study; this study is a "course" for the intern program. Student evaluation of the program takes place in individual conferences with the departmental faculty and in group discussions during the methods course. The responsibilities of the student intern are established by the supervising teacher and the departmental faculty in terms of the student's perceived competency and needs. The students are required to keep daily diaries of their intern activities, and these are submitted to their advisors at the end of the term. The supervising teachers evaluate intern performance. (CK)

ED051221

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An Intern Program of Pre-Student Teaching Experiences for Speech Communication Majors

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During the fall term of 1969, the Department of Communication at Michigan State University initiated a program designed to provide prospective secondary teachers with intern experiences in addition to those usually received during the formal student teaching program. Institution of this program was based on a limited pilot project conducted in 1968. The purpose of this abstract is to briefly outline: (1) the rationale underlying the formulation of this program; (2) the administrative procedures employed to operationalize and maintain the program; (3) intern and supervising teacher participation in the program; and (4) future plans for the program. While we would like to submit a full report of the program at this time, our formal evaluation will not be complete until late spring.

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Program Rationale

For several months prior to the beginning of the 1969 fall term, the communication education program at Michigan State under went an extensive evaluation. Among the underlying reasons for this evaluation was a major concern on the part of the faculty and students concerning the extent of teaching activity experienced by students prior to receiving their teaching certificates. As with most states, the Michigan teacher-certification officials requires the formal student teaching experience which amounts to one 10-week term of an observation/teaching nature. However, the Department of Communication has little to say about the

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exact prescription of responsibilities. The students apply to the Teacher Placement Office of the Department of Education and are placed and observed by that office.

After detailed discussions with the Dean of the College of Communication Arts, prospective student teachers, and high school superintendents and teachers, there existed overwhelming support for a program that would provide communication education majors with an intern-type experience prior to student teaching. The following were set forth as objectives of such a program: (1) to analyze the classroom situation from a communication process point of view; (2) to observe, if possible, a variety of classroom situations in one school system; (3) to clarify expectations of students, their advisers, and high school teachers as to the role of the new teacher; and (4) to provide a relative standard of comparison on which to form an evaluation of teaching as a career.

Administrative Procedures

During the term that the communication education major is enrolled in the methods course ("Methods of Teaching Speech Communication in the Secondary Schools")--approximately one to three terms before student teaching--he also enrolls for 4 credit hours of independent study. It is this independent study course that serves as a "course" for the intern program. It is understood by each student that he will spend 10-12 hours per week at one of the high schools in the Lansing - East Lansing area. Arrangements have been made with these schools to accommodate the interns and as soon as each University term begins, each student is assigned to a specific school system and a teaching supervisor. During the internship, periodic visits are made to the school by departmental faculty to discuss the student's progress with the supervising teacher. Student evaluation of the program takes place in individual conferences with the departmental faculty and in group discussions during the methods course.

Intern-Teacher Participation

The responsibilities of the student intern are established by the supervising teacher and the departmental faculty in terms of the student's perceived competency and needs. For some students, classroom duties consist of observing a class for several days and then teaching the class a specific course unit. For some students, intern responsibilities involve observing several teachers to get some idea of variability in teaching style and philosophy. And for many, intern duties consist of "team teaching" classes with the supervising teacher. Several of our students have directed plays, coached debate/forensics, advised students, etc. during their intern term.

The students are required to keep daily diaries of their intern activities and these are submitted to their advisers at the end of the term. In addition, the interns are asked to submit lesson outlines they prepared during the term. Finally, they are expected to submit a formal report at the end of the term analyzing the teaching situation as a communication process.

The supervising teachers complete an evaluation form asking for their judgments as to the intern's competency and potential. Also, the supervising teachers are asked if they would be willing to continue to serve as supervisors for future interns. Without exception, response to the program has been positive and, in fact, many teachers comment that more University department should initiate such a program.

Future of the Program

The future of the program is certainly optimistic. Feedback from former interns who are currently student teaching suggests that this program was long overdue. Many of the interns go on to work as assistants in the undergraduate communication course in our department as part of a post-student teaching intern

experience. As the program grows we will build a greater information system as to current developments in secondary education. Moreover, the intern program will help "weed out" those individuals who find that the secondary classroom is not their "bag." Finally, the intern program should continue to serve as a method of anxiety-reduction for those fearfully anticipating the student teaching experience.